"We now have a completely redundant system. Based on the Neverfail solution, any component could break, and we still wouldn't be down."

Michael Germain
System Administrator
Alpena Medical Arts

Neverfail
Ensures Continuous Care at Alpena Medical Arts

The Business Need

Downtime simply isn't an option when it comes to providing medical care. This is especially true for clinics in remote, rural areas where the next clinic or hospital might be many miles away. As a certified Rural Health Clinic, Alpena Medical Arts of Alpena, Michigan, is dedicated to providing out-patient primary medical care for residents in the rural northeast region of the state. Patient records and other critical medical information must be available 24/7, with no exceptions.

The clinic had been supported by an IBM AS/400 system, long recognized for its dependability. However, as a green-screen system, the AS/400 cannot support today's Windows-based applications. To maintain their level of care, the clinic realized that the time had come to invest in a new system.

Alpena Medical Arts also knew they needed a fault-tolerant software solution to ensure the same level of availability that they had enjoyed with the AS/400. As Michael Germain, System Administrator for Alpena Medical Arts, explained, "The AS/400 was only down once in seven years. We wanted a similar degree of uptime in a Windows-based solution."

Cost was also a critical factor. Like any small clinic Alpena Medical Arts operated under a modest budget, and they required a solution that respected their financial needs and goals.

The Evaluation Process

The clinic wanted to design and implement a solution that included Microsoft Windows Server 2003, Active Directory, Exchange Server 2003, File Server and SQL 2000/2005. NextGen, a custom application, provided an electronic medical records system.

When the time came to choose a fault-tolerant software solution, Germain recommended Neverfail, based on its superior functionality, competitive cost and ease of implementation. However, a number of options were also considered to ensure proper due diligence.

Clustering was unacceptable simply because the cost was too high. DoubleTake was also evaluated, but as

neverfail

Germain reported, the application was limited in its functionality. "We needed both application and server failure," he said. "DoubleTake only supports server failure. As long as the server is replying to the ping, it doesn't failover."

Germain put Neverfail forward as the best choice. "DoubleTake was really similar in cost to Neverfail, but Neverfail does everything that it does and more, including application monitoring."

Germain also noted that the Neverfail applications would help reduce hardware and software costs by fully supporting their new Microsoft Virtual Server solution for data replication.

The Solution

The clinic chose Neverfail for Exchange, File Server and SQL Server for their high availability solution. Shawn Gordon, Systems Engineer with Neverfail, arrived onsite and in a single day not only installed the Neverfail products but also trained Germain in their use.

Germain was pleased with the Neverfail implementation. "Everything went very smoothly. No problems at all."

Gordon and the Neverfail team also helped implement the critical NextGen application for managing electronic medical records. The team tested and validated the operation of their products with NextGen, ensuring a fault-tolerant, back-end server environment.

The Results

The Alpena Medical Arts clinic feels that they now have the high-availability solution they need to properly serve their community. "We had very specific requirements based on cost and performance. Neverfail was able to meet every one. We're certainly happy with what has been accomplished."

For more information, please contact:

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NORTH AMERICA
t. 512-327-5777 x 1800
email info@us.neverfailgroup.com
web www.neverfailgroup.com

EMEA / ASIA PAC
t. +44 (0) 870 777 1500
email info@neverfailgroup.com
web www.neverfailgroup.com

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